



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Michigan Heart Gallery promotes state wards awaiting adoption

Event is part of November Adoption Month in Michigan

Third statewide Adoption Day is Nov. 22

Sixty Michigan foster children are featured during November – which is Adoption Month in Michigan – in a photographic exhibit called **The Michigan Heart Gallery**. A collaborative effort between the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, the Adoptive Family Support Network and the Michigan Department of Human Services, the gallery features portraits of Michigan children who come from various regions of the state and are representative of different races and ages.



11-year-old Rionne, a foster child whose portrait appears in The Heart Gallery, lives with a Lansing-area family. Here he visits with U.S. Rep. Dave Camp of Midland while his portrait was part of another display in Washington.

***Inset photo:* Rionne stands next to his photo from The Heart Gallery when it appeared as part of a display in Washington, D.C.**

Photos from [Stacey Taylor](#) of Saginaw County DHS.

Photographs in The Heart Gallery were taken by more than 50 professional photographers who donated their time, talent and resources to take portraits that help capture the spirit of children in the foster care system.

Three Michigan Heart Gallery portraits debuted as part of the first National Heart Gallery that opened in Washington D.C. on Nov. 1. Voice for Adoption, a national advocacy group, is sponsoring a similar project for National Adoption Month. They have placed portraits of waiting children in federal lawmaker's offices. U.S. Rep. David Camp of Midland is participating by featuring a Michigan Heart Gallery child in his office during November.

The Heart Gallery concept was initially founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a

way to help children in foster care find adoptive families.

The gallery is on display in the Lansing area through Jan. 9, 2006. The gallery will be displayed at the Michigan Library and Historical Center from Nov. 19-Dec. 2 and at Impression 5 Science Center from Dec. 3-Jan. 9.

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Lansing is the first stop of a multi-city tour for The Michigan Heart Gallery. In the coming months, the portraits will be on display in cities throughout Michigan including Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Saginaw and St. Ignace.

Michigan's annual Adoption Day takes place Nov. 22 across the state. For more information about The Michigan Heart Gallery visit www.miheart.org

DHS employee feted as collaborator of the year

Mary Marois, director of Grand Traverse-Leelanau DHS, was recognized as 2005 Collaborator of the Year by the Grand Traverse Community Collaborative, formerly known as the multipurpose collaborative body. Barbara Lemcool of the collaborative provided this comment:

By Barbara Lemcool, Coordinator

Grand Traverse Community Collaborative. Traverse City

Mary is a visionary who thinks out of the box and is always on the cutting edge of community building and collaboration. She has a strong belief that there is no wrong door for those in need and that saying no is not an option. Mary is passionate about community collaboration and is the first to put her resources on the table. In fact, she is famous for saying, "I think I might be able to find some money to do that."

Mary is always willing to forge ahead with new initiatives and never holds back. She helped create the Regional Health Care Coalition to address access to health care for the uninsured. She is on the steering committee for the five-county Poverty Reduction Initiative and covered part of the costs of bringing Ruby Payne to Traverse City on behalf of the initiative. She was a guiding force behind the creation of Miracle Manor and is again working collaboratively to resurrect the program in order to fill a gap in services for women with addiction problems that will preserve their relationship with their children



Mary Marois

Mary saw the opportunity for a partnership with Traverse City Area Public Schools and other community partners to bring a Family Resource Center to Blair Elementary School to provide a one-stop shopping approach and more convenient access to services for individuals and families in the Blair School community. More recently Mary brought together leaders from business, government, education, human services, health care, faith-based, and other organizations to plan a community response to the anticipated influx of hurricane refugees.

Mary is committed to ensuring that customers don't have to jump through a myriad of hoops to get their needs met, and she will cut through any and all red tape to accomplish something that makes sense for the individuals and families. She truly walks the walk when it comes to collaboration and putting customers first.

Those of us that work with Mary know that she always gives others the credit for the accomplishments I've mentioned and many others we don't have time to talk about this morning. I am thrilled that she is getting the recognition she so richly deserves as the Grand Traverse Community Collaborator of the Year.

Bravo FIM Star 2005! It's a wrap!

From Deryl Gardner, State Administrative Manager
DHS Office of Training & Staff Development, Lansing
GardnerD@michigan.gov

For the third year the Office of Training and Staff Development STAR training has been educating and entertaining family independence managers (FIM) across the state. Most audience reviews of FIM STAR 2005 show the July-Sept. 2005 training was relevant, enjoyable and offered a chance to network with peers.

Deryl Gardner and managers **Luann Mularz** & **Judy Ansuini** designated five diverse workshops that offered opportunities for skill-building, skill sharing and sharpening policy knowledge. The workshop topics came from 2004 evaluations and included:

- **Judgment Super STAR administrative hearings** offered a light for the FIMs as they explored the hearing process. **Bonnie Reno** presented this workshop with the energy of a shooting star.
- **Vocal Super STAR communication** allowed FIMs to share positive messaging, active listening, and strategies for keeping staff engaged and thriving. The voice of this workshop was **Barina Foutner**.
- **Intervention Super STAR domestic violence** hit a home run by discussing and sharing strategies to support clients and staff against a formidable opponent. Trainers were **Joyce Wright** and **Penny Hackett-Evans** of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.
- **SER Extraordinaire Super STAR** engaged participants with an emergency-related game and quizzes that explored emergency services. **Lupe Koutsoubos** guided the discussion and kept the score.
- **Golden Oldies Super STAR SSI MA** was brought to you by DJ Mike who sang and swiveled his way through the complicated melodies of Medicaid. **Mike Firestone** became DJ Mike.

Participants comments included: "pertinent to our clients and important to share with staff," "excellent information," "great information," "good job!" "fun while learning," "nicely done," "very entertaining and informative." OTSD thanks the presenters and the participants who learned, enjoyed, networked and added another star to their skills.

Isabella DHS partners with Early Head Start on federal grant

From Julie Warner, CPS Supervisor
Isabella County DHS, Mt. Pleasant
WarnerJ2@michigan.gov
& Jillian Ritter, Lead Home Visitor
Early Head Start Program

Isabella County DHS and EightCap Inc. collaborated on a federal grant during 2002 to provide Early Head Start services to children in the child welfare system. The proposal resulted in a \$225,000 grant. It was one of two grants awarded in Michigan and one of 24 proposals funded across the country.

The grantees were charged with expanding the service network in local communities to better meet the unique needs of children and families in the child welfare system. Our Early Head Start center was opened in Mt. Pleasant in November 2004.

The program serves 20 children with open CPS or prevention cases in both a center- and home-based model. Either children's protective services or prevention services staff members make referrals for children that attend the center. Foster care staff members participate in quarterly discussions about services to children.

At risk children can attend the Building Blocks Child Care Center 2-4 days per week based on need. Between 8-16 children are enrolled in the center while 4-12 children receive home-based services. Children who attend the center also receive monthly home visits.

Staff from both agencies developed the program, a common vision and a collaboration agreement that detailed exactly what each agency is responsible for and expected outcomes.

Together, Early Head Start and DHS child welfare specialists are working to provide the most extensive services possible to families with children ages 0-3. This collaboration allows staff from both agencies to meet that goal.



Year-long state employee Blood Challenge launched Nov. 1

From Michigan Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom

Michigan faces frequent blood shortages. While 70 percent of the population can give blood, only five percent of persons eligible actually do. Vacation times and holidays see even lower numbers of blood donations. But the need for lifesaving blood never goes on vacation.



The blood supply is of significant concern to me. It is a matter of public health as well as preparedness. The Governor has asked me to spearhead a special campaign in partnership with the state's three major blood banks - the American Red Cross, Michigan Community Blood Centers, and the Upper Peninsula Regional Blood Center - to increase blood donation among our own employees.

I join Gov. Granholm in announcing the **State of Michigan Employee Blood Challenge: November 2005-October 2006**. The goal is to grow collections among state of Michigan employees by 20 percent. We can all take the lead in raising awareness as well as make a considerable ongoing contribution to the state's blood supply simply by rolling up our sleeves. Did you know:

- You can give blood once every 56 days?
- Just because you were once unable or ineligible to give blood doesn't rule out your trying again?
- One blood donation saves up to three lives?

Watch for more information on the challenge and visit <http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral> and click on the Blood Challenge logo in the lower left corner to learn more about the Michigan Employee Blood Challenge.

Date: Oct. 21

To: Gov. Jennifer Granholm

Subj: Help from Michigan

On Sept. 26 I convinced my 87-year-old mom to go and apply for aid due to damage she suffered as a result of the storm Katrina. This was difficult, as my mom had never sought financial assistance from any source for any reason. When we arrived at the Civic Center we were directed to a table where a lady was to assist us in completing the form and to let us know if mom qualified for emergency Food Stamps. The person introduced herself as **Geraldine Monroe**. We later met the other two ladies at the table who were **Sue Saxton** and **Lachay Wilson**.

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

All these ladies work for the Department of Human Services in Michigan. Even though they informed us that mom did not qualify for the program they did so in a manner that made mom and I feel okay about applying. They are truly professionals and were great representatives of your state. I believe these ladies were working in the Warren District office. If all the folks in Michigan are as nice as these ladies it must be a great place to live.

I would also thank you for allowing your employees to come to Alabama to assist our folks. Without assistance from other states Alabama personnel could never have gotten the interviews and the funds to the people in a timely manner. Because my brother and I did all of the cleanup and fixing things at mom's she did not have enough expenses to meet guidelines. However, it was a nice experience meeting with the Michigan ladies. Once again thanks to you and your great state and please give my regards to the nice ladies.

Ann S. Wilson

Saraland, Ala.

■ *The three DHS employees are family independence specialists in the Macomb County Warren District office. They were part of 25 Michigan employees that traveled to Alabama in September to assist victims of hurricane Katrina.*

Date: Oct. 21

To: Lapeer County DHS, Lapeer

Subj: Customer service



Barbara McDonald
and family

Dear Holiday Volunteer: Just a short note to say thanks for helping me fill out the Holiday Depot application. I hate asking for help but you really put me at ease and made me feel comfortable. Your great attitude helped me walk out unashamed and with a smile on my face! It takes a village to raise a child and Thanks for being part of our village!

Barbara McDonald

Lapeer

■ *Karen Foster, community resource coordinator for Lapeer & Sanilac FIA, sent this letter. "Our community resource staff are a strong part of our team," Foster said. "In this case, the person is not named in the letter (is) **Laura Zalant**. We are proud (volunteers) reflect the attitude and values we want our staff to have."*

Date: Sept. 6

To: Pamela Harville, family independence manager
Macomb County Warren District office, Warren

Subj: **Mary Cooper**

I want to compliment Ms. M. Cooper for the amazing assistance she has been. Not only is she a knowledgeable, competent and exceptionally hard-working professional, she is such a caring and kind person. She is so dedicated to her clients that it's obvious that hers is more than a job – it's a vocation. I've had a very unusual case and she was always available to help me through the maze and she cared what happened to me. I know you were also involved and I thank you so much. In fact, I've always had wonderful experiences with the Warren office. Thanks to all the staff.

I've known Ms. Cooper from another case where I acted as the caregiver. She has always been a blessing. It would be wonderful if you could forward a copy of this letter to Gov. Granholm, who obviously can't be everywhere at once.

Linda Thauer

Warren

■ *Mary Cooper is an eligibility specialist in the Macomb County Warren District office.*

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
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